UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

MAR 3 1 2006

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

In accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) procedures for the preparation of environmental impact statements (EIS), an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

Project Name:	West Elbridge Water District Water Main Extension
Purpose of Project:	This project involves extending municipal water service to an area presently served by inadequate individual wells.
Project Originator:	Town of Elbridge
Project Location:	Onondaga County, New York
Project Description:	The proposed project is for construction of 11,200 linear feet of 8" diameter water lines, with appurtenant hydrants, valves and service connections, and a pressure-boosting pump station.
Estimated Eligible Project Costs:	$ 612,364
EPA Grant:	$ 336,800

Our environmental review of this project indicates that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the proposed action. Consequently, we have made a decision not to prepare an EIS on the project. This decision is based on a careful review of the project's environmental information document and other supporting information. All of these documents, along with the Environmental Assessment (copy enclosed), are on file at the offices of the EPA Region 2 and the Town of Elbridge, New York, where they are available for public scrutiny upon request. The EA is also available on EPA Region 2's website at htttp://www.epa.gov/region02/spmm/r2nepa.htm#r2docs.

Comments supporting or disagreeing with this decision may be submitted to EPA for consideration. All comments must be received within 30 calendar days of the date of this finding of no significant impact (FNSI). Please address your comments to: Grace Musumeci, Chief, Environmental Review Section, at the above address. No administrative action will be taken on the project for at least 30 calendar days after the date of this FNSI.

Sincerely,

Alan J. Steinberg
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

I. Project Identification

Project Name: West Elbridge Water District

EPA Grant Number: XP972705-05

Name & Address of Grant Recipient:
Town of Elbridge
5 Route 31
P.O. Box 568
Jordan, New York 13080

Location: Town of Elbridge, Onondaga County, New York

II. Description of Planning Area

The planning area for this project, the West Elbridge Water District, is located along New York State (NYS) Route 5, in the Town of Elbridge, Onondaga County, New York. (Figures 1 and 2)

Route 5 is the main connector road between the cities of Syracuse, about 10 miles to the east, and Auburn, about 5 miles to the southwest. The planning area is in transition from a rural to a suburban character, and bridges the more densely developed western Syracuse and eastern Auburn suburbs. Route 5 is heavily trafficked and has strip development along both sides of its length. Most of the people residing in the study area commute to work in the Syracuse or Auburn areas.

In recent years, this heavily traveled corridor has experienced substantial commercial and industrial development. Most of the properties along the 1.6 miles of Route 5 from Hamilton Road, just west of the Village of Elbridge, to the Cayuga County line, are now occupied by commercial or manufacturing enterprises. Commercial growth in this area is consistent with the Town's zoning, which identifies an 800-foot corridor on each side of Route 5 as "Business Transitional." There are also single and multi-family residential buildings that predate the more recent commercial development.

There is no public water supply currently serving the study area. An existing public water supply main terminates just east of the study area, and is supplied from the nearby Village of Jordan's water system. The Village of Jordan receives its water from a connection to the City of Syracuse water conduits. The City's source of water is Skaneateles Lake. This water source is of very high quality, presently requiring only disinfection, which is provided by the City at the lake intakes.

LOCATION MAP

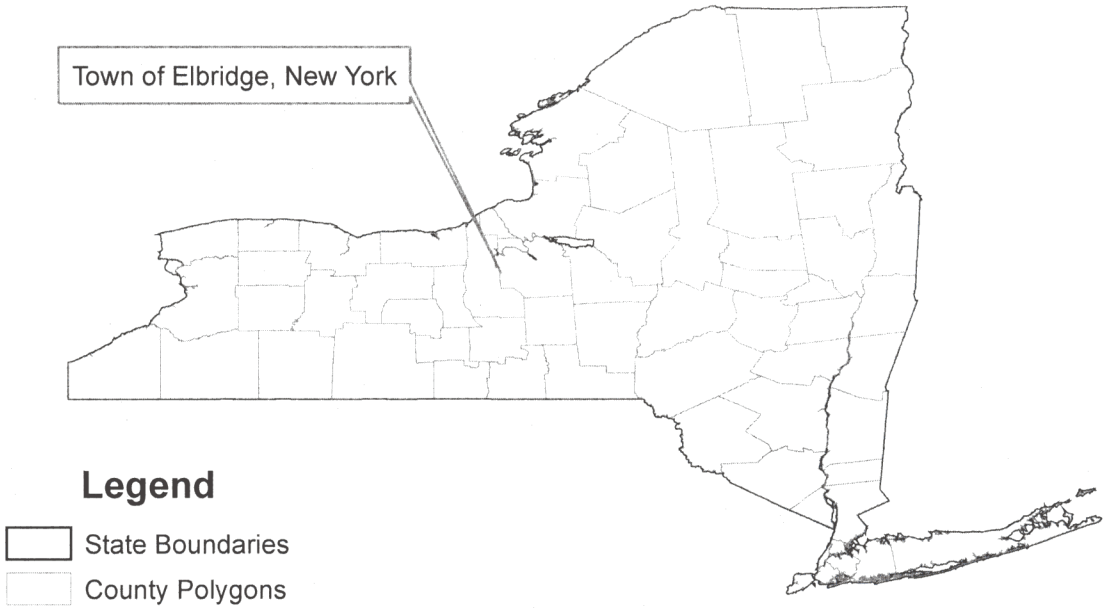
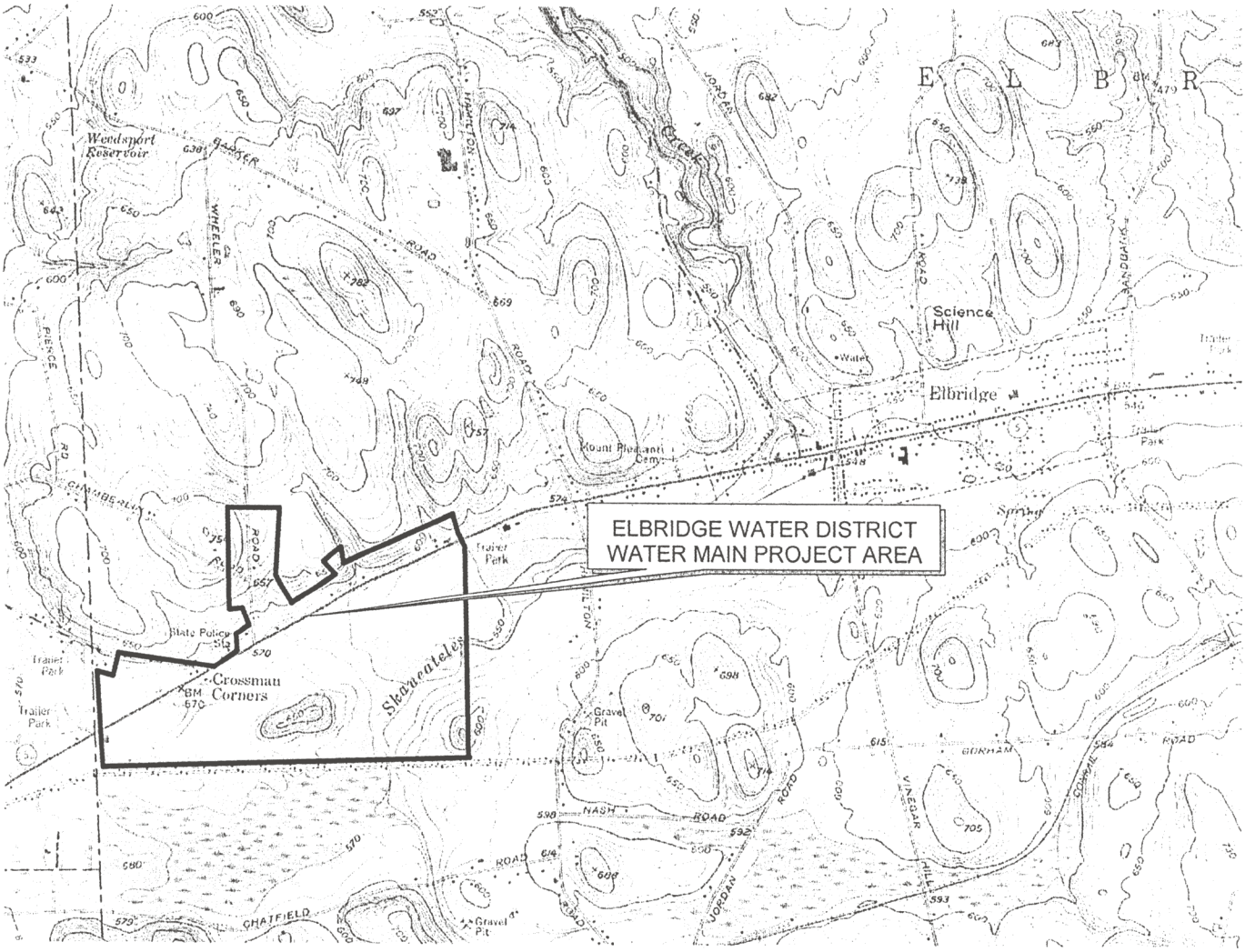


FIG. 1

ELBRIDGE, NEW YORK
WATER DISTRICT



0.9 0 0.9 1.8 Miles

Elbridge Water District

N
W E
S

FIG. 2

In 2001, the Town constructed a 12" diameter water line along one section of Route 5 to serve expansion of an existing manufacturing facility. The properties along the remaining 6,000 feet of Route 5 to the Cayuga County line are dependent on private wells for their water supply. The quantity and quality of water from these wells is inadequate and unreliable. Businesses in this area have prospered, and have reported a potential and desire for further growth. However, these businesses are reluctant to invest in such growth without a reliable supply of quality water.

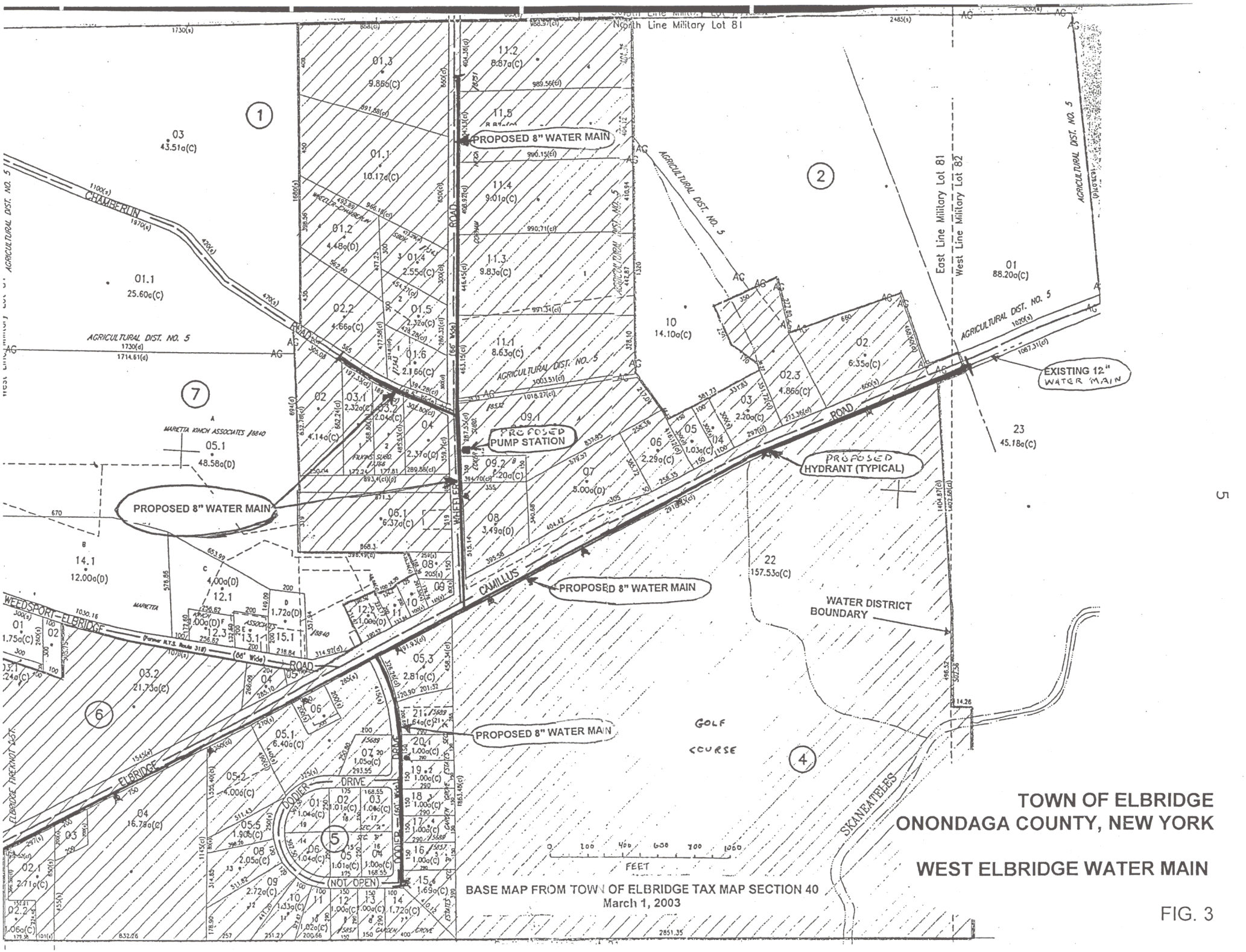
III. Purpose and Need for Project

The purpose of this project is to provide water of good quality, more reliably, and in greater amounts. Existing development in the planning area currently relies on wells for water supply. The quantity and quality of water provided by these wells has been unreliable and inadequate. Residential property owners have been incurring great expense to develop additional wells to replace failed wells. Commercial property owners anxious to expand their businesses have been reluctant to do so without a reliable supply of good quality water. Fire protection is also limited in the absence of a municipal water system. The proposed project would extend municipal water from the existing 12" diameter water main along Route 5 which presently terminates at the east end of the planning area.

IV. Detailed Description of Selected Plan/Preferred Alternative

The project consists of approximately 11,200 linear feet of 8" diameter ductile iron pipe water main, with appurtenant hydrants, valves and service connections, and a small pressure boosting pump station. (Figure 3) Village of Jordan officials have indicated that their system has the necessary capacity to service the area, and the Town of Elbridge has entered an Intermunicipal Agreement with the Village of Jordan to operate and maintain the West Elbridge Water District.

The proposed water main would be installed within existing highway rights-of-way on the south side of Route 5, from its connection to the existing 12" main to the county line, a distance of about 6,000 feet. At the Wheeler Road intersection, a side main would cross Route 5 in a bored casing and extend up the east side of Wheeler Road a distance of about 3,200 feet. At the Chamberlin Road intersection, a side main would cross Wheeler Road and extend up the south side of Chamberlin Road a distance of about 800 feet. At Dodier Drive, on Route 5, a side main would extend along the west side of Dodier Drive about 1,200 feet. The proposed pressure booster pump station would be installed on the east side of Wheeler Road about 550 feet north of Route 5. This pump station would have two 3 horsepower pumps with variable frequency controls and a small hydro-pneumatic pressure tank, located below grade.



BASE MAP FROM TOWN OF ELBRIDGE TAX MAP SECTION 40
March 1, 2003

TOWN OF ELBRIDGE
ONONDAGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

WEST ELBRIDGE WATER MAIN

FIG. 3

5

V. Projected Project Costs

Total Project Cost:	$686,855
EPA Grant Eligible Cost:	$612,364
Actual EPA Grant (9/19/2005)	$336,800

VI. Evaluation of Alternatives

A. No Action Alternative

Under the "no action" alternative, the public water supply would not be extended to service the planning area. Residents and commercial enterprises would have to continue to rely on wells that do not provide an adequate supply of good quality water, and fire protection would not be improved in the local area. This could have adverse health impacts on consumers and stifle economic growth. As the need to address these problems has been identified as a high priority community concern, "no action" is not a practical alternative.

B. Alternative Location/Routing

Road rights-of-way represent the shortest and most direct routes between the properties to be served and the existing water main. Further, because the road rights-of-way were previously disturbed during road construction, using them would result in the least environmental impacts. With routing in the rights-of-way, there does not appear to be a practicable alternative to building the improvements in the proposed locations.

C. Water Line Construction (Proposed Plan)

The proposed alternative involves the installation of 11,200 linear feet of 8" diameter water mains along Route 5 and portions of Wheeler, Chamberlin and Dodier Roads. This alternative is the most practical and economically feasible solution to the water supply issues in the planning area.

VII. Environmental Consequences of the Selected Plan

A. Evaluation of Impacts

1. Surface and Ground Water Quality: Skaneateles Creek, which through the extreme southeast corner of the study area, is classified as C(T), Special Trout Waters, by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Other surface waters within the study area are local

drainage channels that are unclassified and mostly intermittent. There are no surface water discharges of effluent within the study area.

No significant impacts to surface or ground water quality in the project area are expected. Installation of the water mains and appurtenances will not affect surface water runoff, drainage flow patterns, the bed or banks of existing streams or water bodies, sole source aquifers, or groundwater quality or quantity. Direct impacts from construction of the proposed water mains will be minimized through the use of standard stormwater erosion control practices, in accordance with State and Federal requirements and permits.

As most of the parcels in the service area are already developed, there will be little additional runoff from future development. The vacant parcels with the greatest potential for future development are the ten residential lots in the existing Dodier Drive Subdivision and the two large commercial lots fronting the south side of Route 5. The surface topography on the south side of Route 5 is relatively flat, so that the effect of surface runoff from these parcels is minimal and can be mitigated by conventional stormwater pollution prevention practices if and when the parcels are developed. The soils in the area are well drained and well suited for receiving septic tank effluent from on-site wastewater disposal systems, and the remaining undeveloped lots are large enough to permit proper design and placement of such systems.

2. Vegetation and Wildlife: The water main improvements will be constructed within the rights-of-way of existing roadways. The rights-of-way areas were previously disturbed during highway construction and generally do not contain high value habitat areas. The work involves excavating a trench, placement of the piping within the trench, restoration of the ground surface, and re-seeding with native vegetation. Excavation will not be extensive and the ground surface will be restored within a relatively short time.

3. Air Quality: Onondaga County is in attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) except for ozone for which it is currently listed as unclassifiable. However, based on several years of clean data, in the next several months EPA expects to designate the county as being in attainment for ozone. This project is not expected to cause any violations of the NAAQS. The most notable localized impact on air quality in the study area is caused by the existing heavy vehicular traffic on Route 5, most of which is through traffic between Syracuse and Auburn. The proposed project is not expected to affect that traffic volume. Direct

impacts on air quality from operations associated with construction of the proposed water mains will be minimal and temporary.

4. Environmentally Sensitive Areas:

a. Wetlands: There is a wetland which adjoins the southern boundary of the study area in several places. Most of the study area boundary that adjoins the wetland is adjacent to an existing golf course. Wetland areas also follow Skaneateles Creek, a stocked trout stream, as it crosses the southeastern corner of the study area through the golf course. There will not be any direct impacts on the wetlands resulting from construction of the proposed water mains, as the water mains are located over 500 feet from the nearest wetland area, and standard practices for controlling stormwater erosion and sedimentation from construction operations will be employed. Secondary impacts from development of the vacant parcels are also not expected, as none of these parcels are within 100 feet of the wetlands; moreover stormwater runoff from these parcels can be controlled using standard practices, if and when the parcels are developed.

b. Floodplains: Most of the study area is above 100 year flood plain elevation for the area, except where Skaneateles Creek crosses the southeastern corner of the golf course. The proposed water mains are located along the existing roadways, above the 100 year flood elevation, and the vacant parcels are all above the 100 year flood elevation. Consequently, the proposed project will have no effect on flooding.

c. Agricultural Lands: This project does not involve the acquisition of any agricultural lands. The District boundary was intentionally drawn to exclude the vacant lands beyond the frontage properties, and no provisions have been made in the design of the proposed facilities to serve these vacant lands. Thus, it also does not include the undeveloped portions of the existing Agricultural District No. 5, which lies to the north, northeast and northwest of the District. Construction of the proposed water mains will be within existing highway rights-of-way, between the edge of existing pavements and existing natural gas mains. Consequently, the project will have no direct impacts on agricultural lands.

There is already another source of municipal water, from the Town of Brutus, available to the agricultural lands lying east and west of

the study area. Thus, providing service to the existing residential parcels fronting the roads bracketed by these agricultural lands will neither encourage nor discourage development or alienation of these agricultural lands.

Further, the proposed facilities to be constructed by the West Elbridge Water District are designed to serve only the parcels within the water district. The proposed pressure boosting pump station is designed to only provide residential service pressure to the existing residential parcels within the water district, and does not have the capacity that would be needed to provide service north of the district. In any event, if, in the future, it is proposed to extend water mains into the agricultural lands north of the study area, the owners of those lands that are within the agricultural district have the right to opt out of the service area. Consequently, the water mains proposed to be constructed by the West Elbridge Water District will not significantly affect agricultural lands.

5. Archeological and Historic Resources: The proposed water mains will be constructed in existing highway rights-of-way, in previously disturbed land between the existing pavements and other existing underground utilities. The New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the project and, on March 25, 2005, sent the Town a letter indicating that the SHPO had determined that the project is not likely to affect any significant cultural resources. The Town subsequently had a cultural resources literature search study prepared. The results of the study also indicated that the project would not affect significant cultural resources. Accordingly, because the project is not expected to affect any resources listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, no further investigation of historic properties is required.

6. Population Growth/Secondary Impacts of Induced Growth: The project does not include the extension of water mains beyond the existing roadways. As such, the project would not open any significant new areas for development, except as noted in the above discussion of agricultural areas. This will be controlled by local planning and zoning regulations. Municipal water mains already exist to the immediate east and west of the study area, and most of the land within the water district, and adjacent to it along Route 5, is already occupied by residential or commercial development. There are 34 existing single family residences and two multifamily residences in the study area, and 16 parcels in the study area that are classified by the Town Assessor's Office as vacant single family residential. If these developable vacant parcels were to be developed with

single family residences, the increase in population in the study area may be estimated at 45 people. This increase is not considered significant and will have no significant adverse impacts. As a result, the project will have a minimal growth-inducing impact.

7. Noise: Existing noise in the study area is primarily from the existing heavy traffic on Route 5. Residents could experience sporadic increases in noise levels during construction. This effect, however, will be temporary and localized and will be minimized by requiring the machinery to be equipped with proper mufflers and by limiting construction operations to normal work hours.

8. Traffic: Most of the traffic on Route 5 through the study area is through traffic. There will be some localized short-term traffic disruption associated with construction of the proposed water mains. However, the limited potential future development in the study will not significantly increase the existing traffic volume on Route 5.

9. Aesthetics: Because the water main and booster pumps will be located underground, the proposed project will not have any long-term effects on the aesthetic character of the study area. There will be some disruption during construction, but all ground surface disturbed by the construction will be restored to pre-construction condition.

10. Socioeconomic Impacts: There are no existing municipal utility services (water or sewer) in the study area, so there is no current rate paid for water or sewer service. The total annual cost for a typical residential user in the water district is estimated at $555. During the informational meeting or the public hearing for the proposed water district, no objection to the estimated cost was raised by any residential property owners. It appears that there is general support for the project.

11. Environmental Justice: The project area has been reviewed in accordance with EPA's criteria for identifying potential Environmental Justice (EJ) areas. Analysis of the project area indicates that minorities are less than five percent of the population (compared to 34.7%, the percentage for determining minority areas in rural areas of New York State), and that less than six percent of residents have income less than the poverty level (compared to 23.6%, which is the percentage that EPA uses in New York State for determining low income areas). Accordingly, the area does not meet the criteria for being classified an EJ area. Thus, there are no EJ issues associated with the project.

B. Mitigation Measures

1. Surface and Groundwater Quality - The contractor will be required to implement erosion control measures so as to minimize the impact of the excavation and backfill activities. The areas in which the water mains are to be installed will be graded and re-seeded with native vegetation as quickly as possible following construction to restore the natural setting. Standard construction practices will be used to minimize ground disturbance, erosion and drainage problems that may result during and after construction until ground cover is established.

2. Wetlands - No significant wetlands impacts are anticipated. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulate actions within or adjacent to wetlands. This permit process provides ample opportunity to establish construction practices that would mitigate potential adverse impacts through permit requirements, if construction in or adjacent to wetland areas becomes necessary.

3. Traffic - The Town will require the construction contractor to comply with the NYS Department of Transportation Highway Work Permit and Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan. Construction signage and other measures will be implemented to maintain safety and direct traffic around the work area during water main installation.

4. Agricultural Lands - In order to minimize the direct impact of construction on agricultural lands, the Towns will require the contractor to comply with any specific construction requirements established by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The Town will use zoning regulations and site plan review procedures to minimize the conversion of farmland to non-farm uses and to maintain the continuing viability of farming in the agricultural districts.

VIII. Coordination of Environmental Review

A. Public Participation:

The Town of Elbridge conducted a Public Information Meeting in January 2005 to provide property owners within the proposed West Elbridge Water District an opportunity to learn about the project and informally state their concerns, opinions and questions. All property owners of record within the proposed water district were sent an invitation to the meeting. An article in the January 20, 2005 Syracuse Post-Standard described the meeting. On March 2, 2005, the Elbridge

Town Board conducted a Public Hearing on the proposed West Elbridge Water District.

B. Tribal Nations and Agencies Notified and/or Consulted:

1. Onondaga Indian Nation, 716 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New York 13210, Attention: Mr. Joseph Heath
2. Onondaga County Division of Community Development, Civic Center, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, New York 13202, Attention: Ms. Nina Aedon-McLean
3. Onondaga County Department of Health, Civic Center, 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, New York 13202, Attention: Mr. Rich March
4. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 7, Division of Environmental Permits, 615 Erie Boulevard West, Syracuse, New York 13204, Attention: Ms. Joanne March
5. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Water, Bureau of Water Permits, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233, Attention: Mr. Tom Craft
6. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau, P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188, Attention: Ruth L. Pierpont
7. New York State Department of Transportation, Onondaga West Residency, 5700 Defoe Road, Camelus, New York 13031, Attention: Mr. Larry E. Hasard
8. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Agricultural Protection Unit, 10B Airline Drive, Albany, New York 12235, Attention: Dr. Robert Somers
9. Village of Jordan, P.O. Box 561, Jordan, New York 13080, Attention: Mayor Richard Platten
10. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Buffalo, New York Attention: Mr. Ron Marti, Environmental Review Officer

C. References

1. Environmental Information Document (EID) for the West Elbridge Water District, Town of Elbridge, Onondaga County, New York, by Kenneth Kaufman, P.E., January 2006 (the EID contains many additional references and related correspondence)
2. Archeological Sensitivity Summary Letter for the West Elbridge Water District, Alliance Archaeological Services, February 17, 2006